



Toronto Youth Take a Creative Stand as Leaders In Their Community

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – June 12, 2015
Toronto, ON

WHEN: Friday, June 12th, 6 PM
WHERE: Trinity St. Paul's Centre

Twenty-two teens from 12 Toronto schools will take on the issues of bullying, negativity and hopelessness with public performances of their original music, dance and drama. Many coming from challenging situations in society, they will demonstrate the confidence, courage and leadership they have developed through participation in real-life workshops provided by the charity, DAREarts. They demand excellence of themselves and us as their supporters. Families, TDSB teachers, principals, trustees and superintendents will cheer them on. **Everyone is welcome to attend.**

This Friday will also see the inaugural presentation of the **DAREarts William Stevenson Award** to a DAREarts graduate who has shown exemplary creative writing skills. Presenting the award is Monika Jensen-Stevenson, Emmy-winning producer of *60 Minutes* and spouse of the late, internationally renowned author, William Stevenson, best known for 'The Man Called Intrepid'.

Over 150 students from 26 schools spanning the downtown core to east Scarborough have attended the spring program as DAREarts "delegates". They were then entrusted with the job of going back to their respective schools after each DAREarts Day to peer-teach their classmates what they had learned.

Participating schools include: *Bowmore Road PS, Brock PS, Cedarbrook PS, Chine Drive PS, City View Alt., Cosburn MS, Dovercourt PS, Equinox Alt., Fairbank Memorial CS, Humewood CS, Jesse Ketchum PS, Joseph Brant PS, Military Trail PS, Niagara Street JPS, Ogden JPS, Pauline JPS, R. H. McGregor PS, Regent Heights PS, Robert Service Sr. PS, Roden PS, Ryerson CS, Samuel Hearne MS, Westwood MS, Willow Park JPS, Winchester PS*

Background:

DAREarts is a Canadian charity which stands for "Discipline, **Action, Respect, Responsibility and Excellence in Education**". DAREarts' 5-year program works with 9-14 year olds from schools in high-priority neighbourhoods, empowering them to become leaders. Visit www.darearts.com

Each year DAREarts students are selected by their schools, two from each grade who are most in need of the opportunity provided by DAREarts to see a wider world and become leaders. This year DAREarts lead teacher, Laura MacKinnon, has taken the children to a number of arts venues across Toronto including but not limited to the AGO, the Gardiner Museum and the Canadian Opera Company to expand their artistic horizons. She was joined by a number of accomplished Canadian artists including Emmy-winning producer of *60 Minutes*, Monika Jensen-Stevenson; Juno-nominated songwriter Glenn Marais; Dora-winning actor Jamie Robinson; co-artistic director of Opera Atelier Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg; and the first conductor of the Toronto Symphony, Victor Feldbrill. These visits were just the beginning of their experience.

With the DARE **values of Discipline, Action, Responsibility and Excellence**, DAREarts kids are given an opportunity to opt out of destructive behaviour and expectations of failure. They dare themselves to succeed by diving into the programming that DAREarts provides. The kids create their own mandate for a prosperous future. *"I didn't know what prosperity meant until this afternoon."* Words from a grade five student, *"I am DAREarts because I made an effort to guess what it meant, and even though I was wrong, I learned to understand the importance of it."*

DAREarts thanks its education partner, the TDSB, and its lead supporters: Northbridge Insurance, Scotiabank, Guy Carpenter, the Ontario Arts Council and Ontario Trillium Foundation.

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